

NATURAL NEWS



The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

Weekly Staff Newsletter
April 30, 1999

A job well done for *Art of Being Kuna* team

The Art of Being Kuna: Layers of Meaning among the Kuna of Panama opens to the public on Saturday, May 1. As always, the exhibition would not have been realized without the enthusiastic participation of dozens of Field Museum scientists, staff, and volunteers.

Thanks go to **Alaka Wali**, in particular, for opening doors through her friendships with the exhibition's curators and with the Kuna people themselves. Thanks also to **Carol Fialkowski**, **Robin Foster**, and **Mac Chapin** for helping us tap the rich interdisciplinary potential of this fascinating show.

Building on their guidance to craft an exciting series of opening events and public programs, **Kristie Webber** and **Johanna Kryntzky** steered their colleagues in the Education Department: **Mara Cosillo-Starr**, **Encarnacion Teruel**, **Joe Byrnes**, **Randy Strickland**, **Lauren Niimi**, and **Mary Ann Bloom**. **Pat Kremer**, **Carolyn Byrne**, **Nancy O'Shea**, **Laura Dini**, **John Lotenero** and all of the Public Relations Department organized an innovative promotional program, including a press preview featuring Kuna spokesmen and artists here to help kick off the exhibition.

The Exhibit Department Design and Production team applied their usual skills and creativity to the striking exhibit design. Exhibit Designer **Robert Weiglein** found a lucid and informative way to present over 300 artifacts and immerse the visitor in the Kuna environment. **Jean Cattell**, **Lynn Hogan**, and **John Petreikis** adapted the Kuna's own vibrant palette to produce banners, signage, photomurals, and brochures. Exhibit Developer **Peter Stevenson** discovered intriguing links between the exhibition and the Museum's own collections and scientific programs. Lighting Designer **Trigg Waller**, with help from **Abe Bloom** and **Sarah Hudgins**, created the intimate lighting which enhances each colorful *mola*. **Eric Manabat** detailed all the cases and structures, and Production Supervisor **Eric Frazer** coordinated the usual budget, construction, and installation demands.

Finally, thanks are due once more to the skills and expertise of the Field Museum mountmakers and preparators, who work under pressing deadlines to produce temporary exhibitions with as much polish and finish as the finest permanent exhibit. Gratitude goes to Crew Chiefs **Rudy Garcia** and **George Chavez**, and to technicians **Peter DeRiemer**, **Amanda Flood**, **Bruce Heimbach**, **Rick Hope**, **Lance Kirsch**, **Steve Lalik**, **Beth Tanner** and **Steve Villano** for producing another exemplary Field Museum exhibition.

Submitted by **David Foster**



FIELD NOTES

Week of May 3

Public Events/Special Events

Members' Night
• Thursday & Friday

Open Finance Forum
• Friday 10 a.m., LH2

Tim Flannery Lecture
• Saturday 3 p.m.

Cynthia Moss Lecture
• Sunday 6 p.m.

Staff/Volunteer Events

Aerobics Class
• Tuesday & Thursday 5 p.m.
Ground Floor, East Stairwell

ATTENTION MOVIE BUFFS

*Call or stop by the
Human Resources office for
discounted movie tickets for
Loews/Cineplex Odeon/Sony
Theatres for only \$5.*

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Corals, conchs, and conservation

Rüdiger Bieler (Zoology) has recently returned from fieldwork in the Florida Keys where he teamed up with Research Associate **Paula Mikkelsen** to continue work on a biodiversity assessment of the molluscan fauna in the only coral reef of the continental United States. The relatively calm weather allowed for a busy dive schedule in the offshore reefs and led to an increase of the running total of recognized Florida Keys mollusk species to 1,418 (up from 630 in 1995). Additional species are undoubtedly hiding in the numerous samples of "micro-mollusks" that have been taken with sediment probes and are now en route to the Museum for further sorting and processing. One of the main aspects of this trip was to compare the biota of recently protected reefs (no-take zones, and research access only) with those of nearby "commercial dive sites" (which comprise the most heavily SCUBA-dived reefs in the world). Interesting results included the discovery of several species pairs of bivalves that previously had been recognized as "ecological forms" in the Bay of Florida and the offshore reefs, respectively. Closer morphological observation and the first study of their anatomy made it clear that several distinct species are involved. Among the more positive findings in the heavily stressed reefs were the large number of sea turtles encountered and the fact that the now completely protected Queen Conch (of conch chowder, conch salad, and conch fritter fame) seems to be doing "OK" in some sheltered seagrass areas of the back reefs.

During their stay in Florida, Rüdiger and Paula attended the International Conference on Scientific Aspects of Coral Reef Assessment, Monitoring, and Restoration in Ft. Lauderdale. This congress, the first of its kind, provided an excellent opportunity to bring together scientists who have research projects in coral reef environments with managers of coral reef parks such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Paula presented a paper entitled "Marine Biodiversity and the Need for Systematic Inventory," making a strong case for the involvement of museum-based systematists and collections in the exploration and long-term monitoring efforts of such natural resources. Back in the Keys after the congress, the two continued their collecting efforts with dredging and hand-collecting in the westernmost Florida Bay and met with Marine Sanctuary officials to plan their involvement in the grant-funded "Sustainable Seas Expedition" endeavor that will sample mollusks from deepwater sites off Florida's reefs beginning this summer.

Crane, Patterson address endangered species symposium

On April 19, **Peter Crane** (Academic Affairs) and **Bruce Patterson** (Zoology/Mammals) attended a symposium and workshop entitled "Endangered Species Symposium: genetic and information resources for the 21st Century" outside Orlando, Florida. Peter delivered the meeting's keynote address. Later in the week, Bruce delivered a seminar in the department of Ecology and Evolution, University of Oregon, on elevational zonation of Andean vertebrates in southeastern Peru. Work on vertebrates in Peru's Manu Biosphere Reserve was begun by former curator John Fitzpatrick and **Dave Willard** in 1979, extended by their grad students **Doug Stotz** and **Dale Clayton** in the mid-1980s, and expanded (with special attention to mammals) by former grad students and Museum associates Victor Pacheco and Sergio Solari in the 1990s. Work on Manu's mammals, birds and their parasites continues: Bruce, Doug Stotz (ECP) and **Bill Ballard** (Zoology/Insects) recently received three years of grant support from NSF. Their first 10-week field season begins in August of this year.

The Field Museum Presents



Credit: Martyn Colbeck

An Evening with Cynthia Moss

Female Choruses and All-Male Clubs: The Social Organization of African Elephants

Thirty years ago, Cynthia Moss, now an African Wildlife Foundation researcher, left a promising journalism career in New York and set out on her own to document the complex social lives of elephant families. Her distinguished elephant research has contributed to the worldwide support for African elephant conservation. Her studies of elephants in their natural habitat are the most comprehensive ever recorded, often compared to Jane Goodall's study of the chimpanzees. Two award-winning BBC/PBS "Nature" films and numerous books have brought Moss' compelling stories about elephants into the spotlight. Having managed the longest-running African elephant research project ever, she has accumulated unprecedented data on the elephant families that live in Kenya's Amboseli National Park in the shadow of Mt. Kilimanjaro. In her lecture, Cynthia Moss will share her first-hand experience observing their intricate social interactions and family dynamics. A book signing will follow.

Cynthia Moss' Amboseli Elephant Research Project is a program of the African Wildlife Foundation. The Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund is pleased to present Cynthia Moss as part of its mission to support and encourage conservation action and education throughout the world.

This lecture and book signing is offered in conjunction with the exhibition, *Women in Science: Conversations in Conservation* (through June 27, 1999). This exhibition spotlights seven scientists at The Field Museum who are working to understand and preserve the delicate balance of life on this planet. Three areas—research, education and practice—woven together by the common goal of conservation, are explored through brief biographical sketches, photos, specimens and quotes from each woman.

\$12 (\$10 students,

\$8 Field Museum members)

For tickets or more information,

call (312) 322-8854

Sunday

May 9

6:00 p.m.

The Field
Museum

CHICAGO

Education programs: Cynthia Moss and Tim Flannery

We invite you to come hear Cynthia Moss (please see the enclosed flyer on reverse side) and Tim Flannery speak at the Museum this spring. Staff and volunteers can receive two free tickets to Cynthia Moss by calling ext. 854; no tickets are required for Tim Flannery. For complete lecture descriptions please check the Spring Field Guide.

Tim Flannery

Throwim' Way Leg: Tree-Kangaroos, Possums and Penis Gourds-On the Track of Unknown Mammals in Wildest New Guinea

Saturday May 8, 3 p.m.

Flannery's new book, *Throwim' Way Leg*, recounts his journeys over the last 20 years as a mammalogist in New Guinea. Flannery's research has resulted in the discovery of more than 20 species of mammals that were previously unknown to science. These include a black and white tree-kangaroo that looks like a small panda, a new species of possum, meter-long giant rats and the world's largest cave-dwelling bat thought to be extinct 10,000 years ago.

Cynthia Moss

Female Choruses and All-Male Clubs: The Social Organization of African Elephants

Sunday May 9, 6 p.m.

Moss' distinguished elephant research has contributed to the worldwide support for African elephant conservation. Two award-winning BBC/PBS *Nature* films and numerous books have brought Moss' compelling stories about elephants into the spotlight. In her lecture, Cynthia Moss will share her first-hand experience observing their intricate social interactions and family dynamics.

Submitted by **Randell Strickland**

MAYOR'S WEEKLY TRAFFIC BULLETIN

- Dearborn Street from Wacker to Adams will be the parade route for the Polish Constitution Day Parade on May 1, beginning at noon and extending through the afternoon.
- Festival Cinco de Mayo will take place at McCormick Place on May 1 and 2 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The use of public transportation is urged.
- Soccer continues with the Chicago Fire playing at Soldier Field on Saturday, May 1 at 7 p.m. The use of public transportation is advised.
- On May 2 at 8 a.m., the St. Jude Police Parade will occur. The parade route goes from Michigan Avenue between Wacker and Chicago, then to Chicago Avenue between Michigan Avenue and State Street, disbanding at Holy Name Cathedral by mid-morning. For more details, please contact the Chicago Police Department at (312) 744-4153.

Submitted by **Diane White**

New phone numbers and voicemail

As many of you already know, The Field Museum is upgrading its telephone system. Our service to the building is being increased to T1 lines for better capacity and more reliable connections. What this means to you is that anyone currently with a three digit extension will receive their own seven digit direct dial number.

We will also have all new voicemail with expanded features and capacity.

All telephone numbers in the Museum are being assigned new Direct Dial In (DID) numbers. This includes all fax machines, modems and any other current lines coming into the Museum. The only exceptions are (312) 922-9410, our 800 number, and specific numbers that must be operated independently of the switch system for lifesafety and security reasons.

By now, most people in the building have been assigned new seven digit telephone numbers. The few remaining will receive their numbers next week through the telephone renovation contacts in their departments.

A complete cutover to the new system will occur in the weekend of May 22.

Between now and then, there will be continued updates direct to departments, via e-mail and here in the *Natural News*. Please e-mail me at lfrench from inside the Museum.

A few of the questions asked so far include:

Q: Will I still need to dial 9 to get an outside line.

A: Yes. We are still running our service through our own switch on the fourth floor.

Q: How will I contact another internal extension?

A: Dial the last four digits of the person's direct number.

Q: We need two extra lines to handle extra call volume to our department. Is this the time to request that?

A: No. While this system-wide upgrade will increase our capacity, the first step is to get it in place servicing the status quo. A week or two after the cutover we can begin to take requests for increases in service.

Q: Will our fax machines need to be reprogrammed?

A: Yes. Every telephone number in the Museum will now run through our switch. This means any machine with its own outside line (faxes, modems, etc.), will need to be reprogrammed to dial 9 first.

Q: Will we get new phones?

A: No. The system upgrade is completely compatible with your current desksets.

Q: When will we be trained on the new voicemail?

A: Classes will be set up in the week before cutover. There will also be an internal help desk available once the new system is in place. The voicemail is the same one used by Ameritech for their residential service though *they* only allow their customers to use about 10% of its features. Bottom line on this is that the most prompts are single digit and will feel logical and familiar if you have voicemail at home.

Q: How long will the transition to the new system take?

A: Prepwork within the building has already begun though no changes will be visible to staff until cutover. The cutover will begin after hours on May 21 and should be complete sometime early the morning of Saturday May 22.

Please send your questions to lfrench@fmppr.fmnh.org.

Submitted by Lou French

THANK YOU

I want to thank all of the staff and volunteers who donated money to help the poor dog that was hit by the car last week. In just two days I was able to collect over \$150. There were some staff members who were willing to donate this week, but unfortunately the dog did not make it. The vet, Dr. Ahern of Cermak Animal Clinic in Berwyn, did not charge for his services, just for the supplies. There were \$45 left after the bill was paid, so **Steve Furnett** has donated this to Lakeshore Animal Shelter. Lakeshore Animal Shelter is one of the few shelters that are willing to take any dog no matter what age or health condition, and try to find them a new home. I was impressed with the number of staff and volunteers who were willing to help out, two volunteers gave \$15 each. It is nice to work at an organization with so many wonderful people.

Submitted by **Paula Horecny**

"Take Our Children To Work Day" a success

As many of you may have noticed, last Thursday we had 28 children (family and friends of staff members) visiting the Museum for "Take Our Children to Work Day." Because of the efforts of so many of our staff, our children enjoyed an educational and fun day learning about various careers here at the Museum. Special thanks to the departments that hosted talks and activities – Museum Stores, Special Events, Education, and Exhibits – as well as the staff that gave the children behind the scenes looks at the scientific areas of the Museum: **Minh-Tho Solomon** (Mammals), **Dave Willard** (Birds), **Clarita Nunez** (Geology), **Ben Bronson** (Anthropology), and **Clara Simpson** (Zoology). Also a very special thanks to the staff in Human Resources and to **Anita Purnell**, whose efforts made the day run smoothly. Initial feedback has told us that the day was very enjoyable for those participating. We have even heard that a few children want to work at the Museum when they grow up! Thanks again to everyone involved. It was well worth the effort.

Check out the pictures below from the day's activities.

Submitted by **Tracey Pilch** and **Robin Wagner**



PR brings home the gold

For the fourth consecutive year, the Public Relations Department has received a Gold Muse Award for television production. *Living Colors: A Butterfly Garden*, a 30-second television commercial, produced by RPM Advertising, received the first place award at the 1999 American Association of Museums Convention held this week in Cleveland. *Assignment Rescue: Your Assignment*, a 60-second radio commercial, also produced by RPM Advertising, took second place honors with a Silver Muse Award. As part of the AAM Media & Technology Committee, this annual competition recognizes the best museum films, videos and audio programs from museums across the United States and Canada.

Submitted by **Pat Kremer**

Check out ReptileFest at Northeastern Illinois University

Just when you thought ReptileFest couldn't get any sexier, the Chicago Herpetological Society added this to its annual ectothermic extravaganza on **May 1 and 2**:

Paul Sereno, the globe-trotting (and endothermic) University of Chicago paleontologist, whose discoveries continue to redraw our picture of dinosaurs and the Earth they lived on, will be at ReptileFest both days with an amazing exhibit of his research, including a dinosaur skull.

But that's not all.

ReptileFest features an eight-foot alligator, big snakes that you can have your picture taken with, lots of iguanas, interactive tortoises you can crawl around with and hundreds of other reptiles and amphibians from around the world. Their owners will be there, too, to share their expertise in herp husbandry.

Special sessions will introduce kids to reptiles and help families make appropriate pet choices. And CHS has its own collection of dinosaurs on display in DINO-RAMA. In addition, vendors will have reptile-related products, books, T-shirts and more. At Shedd Aquarium's vendor table, \$1 of every purchase will be donated to Caribbean iguana research.

It all takes place from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days at Northeastern Illinois University's P.E. building, Foster and St. Louis (5200 N, 3500 W), in Chicago.

ReptileFest admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for kids under twelve; kids under three enter for free. Shedd and Field Museum staff members who volunteer an hour of time either day to help CHS members get a free ticket.

For more information, call Jennie Picciola at the Shedd at (312) 692-3115.

From the Shedd Aquarium

\$\$ FINANCE FORUM \$\$

Open forum with Lisa Wodis

A follow-up to last month's open finance forum has been scheduled for Friday, May 7 at 10 a.m. in Lecture Hall II. Bring your questions and concerns.

Check envelope recycling

Every week when checks are issued, we distribute hundreds of window envelopes throughout the Museum. If you reuse these, great. If they are piling up in your office or getting thrown away, please return them to **Kim Greene in the Finance Department to be recycled for employee check distribution.**

FAN MAIL

Dear Mr. [John] McCarter,

I just wanted to send a word of thanks to you for some of the fine team members on your Field Museum staff.

Back on March 20, my father died suddenly, though not completely unexpectedly, in Ohio. My oldest son, Eric Reichenboch, is a physician in Madison, Wisconsin. We knew that he and his wife, Jenny, were going to be spending that weekend of Mar. 19-21 in Chicago, but neither we nor Jenny's parents had any idea where they were staying. The only hint we had was in a note that Jenny had sent earlier in which she had noted: "Eric wants to see the dinosaurs." Well, to us, that meant that sometime during that weekend they were going to the Field Museum.

We called the museum around 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, and were able to talk to someone named **Beverly** at a security number we were connected with – albeit the switchboard was closed on weekends. Beverly was so patient and kind and took down any information we could possibly share regarding the description of Eric and Jenny, respectively. (We said Eric was 5'10", slight of build with dark brown hair and hopefully with a mustache and goatee still, and weighing about 165 lbs.; Jenny, we said, was about 5'8" or 9", long brown hair, and six months pregnant). Beverly said she would do what she could, but we recognized it was a long shot. And then I left to be with my mother, while my wife stayed behind for a day or two.

When I talked to her that night she said Eric had called, and some of the first words he said were, "Mom, I'm not 165 lbs., I'm only 150." What wondrous words to my wife's ears. The lost had been found! Kudos to your fine, attentive, good sleuthing security staff, and especially, to that winsome and wise woman named Beverly!

Douglas A. Reichenbach
Freeport, MI

Submitted by **Diane White**

Dear Volunteer Coordinator:

Today, my husband and I had the pleasure of having a tour of the Museum conducted by **Joan Connor**. Of all Chicago's museums, the Field is one that we have not visited often. Joan has changed that. Thanks to her, we will frequent the Museum, and are considering becoming members.

One of the highlights of Joan's presentation is her ability to make each culture "come alive" as she speaks. We sat with her on the floor of the Maori Meeting House as she spoke of the building and the culture. It was as though we were transported to another time and place.

Joan is informed, professional, enthusiastic, and a total delight. She is a wonderful example of your docent program.

Sincerely,
Barbara Zink
Docent, Chicago Architecture Foundation

Submitted by **Patti Stratton**

Natural News

The *Natural News* is edited by **Rodger Patience** in the Development office (ext. 617, patience@fmnh.org) and **Erica Kelly** in the Finance Department (ext. 584, ekelly@fmnh.org). Submissions are welcome via e-mail or on disk in Microsoft Word or WordPerfect format. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday at noon. Remember – write early and often!